

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-22, and 24-42 are pending in the present application.

The rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-22, and 24-39 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Dreher et al (US 6,716,922B1) is respectfully traversed.

Dreher et al disclose a heat-curable polymeric binder in powder form, comprising from 87.5 to 12.5% by weight, based on the overall weight of the polymeric binder, of at least one water-insoluble polymer A1, from 12.5 to 87.5% by weight, based on the overall weight of the polymeric binder, of at least one water-soluble polymer A2 composed of from 50 to 100% by weight, based on the polymer A2, of at least one ethylenically unsaturated mono- and/or dicarboxylic acid, from 0 to 50% by weight, based on the polymer A2, of at least one ethylenically unsaturated compound E selected from the esters of ethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids and the monoesters and diesters of ethylenically unsaturated dicarboxylic acids with an amine containing at least one hydroxyl group, up to 20% by weight, based on the polymer A2, of one or more further monomers, and from 0 to 30% by weight, based on the overall weight of the polymeric binder, of at least one amine containing a hydroxyl group, said polymeric binder containing from 0.1 to 30% by weight of said amine containing at least one hydroxyl group, in the form of the compound E and/or as a separate component. (column 3, lines 10 to 37).

The polymer A1 is a free-radical emulsion polymer (column 3, lines 51, 52). It is in general synthesized from 80 to 100 % by weight of at least one ethylenically unsaturated principle monomer, and from 0 to 20 % by weight of at least one ethylenically unsaturated comonomer (column 3, lines 55 to 62). The principle monomers may be linear or branched 1-olefins (column 4, line 17) or styrene (column 4, line 44). The

comonomers may be anhydrides, for example maleic anhydrides (column 4, lines 52 to 54). Several further suitable comonomers are disclosed by Dreher et al.

Component A2 in the polymeric binder according to Dreher et al may comprise at least one ethylenically unsaturated component E which may be in one embodiment prepared by reaction of a dicarboxylic anhydride and a hydroxyl containing amine (column 8, lines 42 to 44). The polymer A2 is further composed of at least one ethylenically unsaturated mono- or dicarboxylic acid. Suitable acids are disclosed in columns 7 and 8 of Dreher et al.

It is clear from the disclosure of Dreher et al that the binder compositions disclosed therein comprise two different polymers, one water-insoluble polymer A1 and one water-soluble polymer A2 which may be composed beside at least one ethylenically unsaturated mono- or dicarboxylic acid, of at least one ethylenically unsaturated component E which is an ester of ethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids or a mono- and diester of ethylenically unsaturated dicarboxylic acids with specific amines containing at least one hydroxyl group. As an alternative, instead of component E, the polymeric binder compositions according to Dreher et al may comprise at least one amine containing a hydroxyl group.

The binder compositions according to the present invention differ from the binder compositions according to Dreher et al in that the binder compositions according to amended claim 1 only comprise one polymer and not two different polymers. Further, specific crosslinkers are claimed in amended Claim 1 of the present application. These crosslinkers are completely different from the amine containing at least one hydroxyl group disclosed in Dreher et al. Additionally, the crosslinker of amended Claim 1 of the

present application is in high amounts, which are higher than the amount of amine containing at least one hydroxyl group used in Dreher et al.

It has been found by the inventors of the present application that binder compositions derived from readily available components are very useful binders for fibrous and/or granular substrates. It is not necessary according to the present invention to prepare complicated polymers as polymer A2 in Dreher et al., which comprise component E or to use very specific unusual crosslinkers as the amine containing at least one hydroxyl group according to Dreher et al to obtain suitable binder compositions.

The binder compositions according to Dreher et al are therefore completely different from the binder compositions as claimed in the present invention. Moreover, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Dreher et al that the specific binder compositions according to the present invention composed of readily available materials are suitable for obtaining products having high mechanical strength and dimensional stability, even under humid conditions. Further, binder compositions according to the present invention exhibit excellent tack under anhydrous application conditions (page 9, line 5 to 9). These advantages of the pulverulent binder compositions of the present invention are demonstrated in Examples 1 to 3 of the present application (page 11, line 5 to page 12, line 7). There is no disclosure or suggestion in Dreher et al of binder compositions exhibiting this excellent tack under anhydrous application conditions. Therefore, Dreher et al fails to meet the threshold for establishing a prima facie case of obviousness and, even if the Examiner were to contend that this threshold was met, the Experimental data set forth in the specification would be sufficient to rebut the same.

Accordingly, Applicants request withdrawal of this rejection.

Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance.

Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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